

T H E
Occasional Paper

Upon the Subject of RELIGION, and
the CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT ; *and* the
present ATTEMPTS against them.

N U M B E R V.

In which the DISSENTERS Complaints and
Pleas for farther LIBERTY, as set forth in a
Weekly Paper, Intituled, *The Old Whig, or*
Consistent Protestant, are consider'd.



L O N D O N :

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THE

Occasional Paper

Upon the Subject of *Manuscripts* and
the *Church of England* : with the
A *ATTACHMENT* of the *Church*.

Number 1.

In which is contained a *Compendious* and
True *History* of the *Church of England* in
the *Reign* of *Henry VIII.* and
the *Reign* of *Edward VI.* and
the *Reign* of *John Calvin.*



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THE *Occasional Paper, &c.*



DISEASES, in the Body politick (as in the Body natural) do not often arise from Disorders in the Head, than from ill Humours in the Body. The Cases are easily distinguish'd; and the sure Symptom of the latter is, when, under a just and equal Administration of Laws, Uneasinesses arise, and Grievances are complain'd of, which have no Existence but in Imagination. I take this to be our Case at present. Complaints there are many and loud; yet never had our Laws a more free and even Course: and what is most surprizing is, that those of all others should be least pleas'd, whom the Government has in a very particular Manner been careful not to offend.

The very Notion of Government necessarily carries with it a Distinction of Powers and Privileges; and there will be no End of Uneasinesses, if Men are never to be satisfied till each one finds himself upon a Level with his Neighbour. - But every Administration will be able to justify itself against such Discontents, if it shall appear that all are treated in a Manner suitable to the Place they stand in, and to the State they bear in the Commonwealth. Every Man has, for himself and his Posterity, certain natural Rights, which in no Case ought to suffer Abridgement farther than the common End of Government requires. But Distinction in Point of Power or Preheminency, are not, *cannot* be, Matters of common Right, but are and must be determined by the particular Capacities, Circumstances, and Qualifications of particular Men, or Bodies of Men, as disposed to have Influence upon the common Safety.

To make some Use of these Observations.

The DISSENTERS are a Body of Men agreeing with us in all Points relating to our Civil Establishment, and differing with us only in some Points of Church Government; in Consequence of which they are broken off from the National Worship, and have set up a Worship of their own. It has been the Sense of all Nations in the World, that *some* religious Establishment is necessary in every Commonwealth: And those who see this Necessity, must see, at the same Time, that this Separation introduced a Necessity of making a Distinction between the two Parties in Point of Civil Power and Privileges. For the National Worship was not *therefore* unfit to be the National Worship because the Dissenters had broken off from it; and since all Religious Establishments are and must *as such* be supported by the Administrations of Civil Power; the Consequence was, either that
the

the National Establishment must be left open to the Practices of those who by their Separation had given publick Evidence of their Dislike of it; or else that Power was to be *confined* to the Hands of those, who by their good Affection to the National Establishment, would naturally be led to employ that Power in its Defence. With this View the *Corporation and Test Acts* were made in King Charles the Second's Reign, which excluded all from Offices of Trust and Power, but such as should give Evidence of their good Affection to the establish'd Religion, by receiving the Sacrament according to the Usage of that Communion. The great Complaint against these Laws in Behalf of Conscience, was not heard of till of late Years. But whereas by some Statutes in former Reigns, they had been made liable to Penalties against which these Laws gave no Relief; this was thought a Hardship, of which the Dissenters were, soon after, eased by the *Toleration Act*. The Benefits whereof they have enjoyed ever since the Revolution, and are likely to enjoy.

This is the whole of the Difference that our Laws make between *Dissenters* from the establish'd Religion, and those who *conform* to the established Religion. The latter are admitted to Offices of Trust and Power in the State, of which the former are made incapable, but at the same Time left free to worship God according to their own Consciences, under an *absolute Exemption* from *Penalties* of all Kinds. Would it not then be surprizing (especially considering the early Care that was taken in the last Reign to ease them of every Weight which might but *seem* to be an Infringement upon the Toleration, and the repeated Assurances they have received in this, that it shall be secured to them in its full Extent; would it not, I say, be very surprizing, after all this, to find them insulting the Government, to hear them pleading incessantly and clamorously for Liberty of Conscience

Science and private Judgment, and crying out at every Turn, Persecution, Oppression, Tyranny! If this should be the Case, it will be Conviction, I trust, to all the World, that these Men are not to be satisfied upon reasonable Terms, and that their Complaints are likely to grow in Proportion as the Favours of the Government increase and multiply upon them. ~~X~~ That ALL Dissenters are chargeable with this Behaviour, I do not take upon my self to assert; but that there is a considerable Party among them of this Spirit, is but too manifest: Witness the Sermons of some of their principal Leaders last Year at *Salters-Hall*.

But the strongest and the fullest Evidence of this Sort is to be had from a *Club* of Writers, who have professedly set themselves up as Advocates for the Dissenting Interest, and deal out their Grievances regularly once a Week, in a Paper call'd, *The Old Whig, or Consistent Protestant*. This Paper has made its Appearance now for above Nine Months, in all which Time it may reasonably be presumed, that they have acquainted the Publick with the most material of what they have to say. I think it may be convenient to lay together their several Complaints, as I find them scattered up and down in the Body of these Papers; which will be of Use to those who desire to understand the Case, who will see in one short View, what it is that these Men are driving at, by some Schemes which the Dissenters and their Friends seem to have very much at Heart, to offer to the Consideration of Parliament.

The *Old Whig* sets out with complaining (Number I.) of the Growth of Popery; which, he says, "is owing to this, among other Causes, That too many have lost the Sense of Liberty, and are ignorant of the true Value of it". These many, who are here represented as lost to all Sense of Liberty, are the whole British Nation, HIMSELF excepted,

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ted, and a few more such *State Physicians*, who are preserved, it seems, by an extraordinary Providence, to awaken the rest out of their Lethargy by their *Blisters* and their *Cauteries*. For thus it follows : “ Since the Principles of *Slavery* are advancing among us, what can be a more incumbent Duty upon every *Englishman*, than to endeavour to revive the ancient Zeal of the *British Nation* against the *Encroachments* of this accursed Evil ? ” And again (Number II.) “ As almost all the valuable Blessings of human Life must necessarily stand or fall with *Liberty*, an Attempt to — defend it against the *Inroads* of *Slavery* — and to discover the private and distant Designs of wicked Men formed against the Interests of it — must be acknowledged to be worthy the Character of, &c.” I perceive the Gentleman does not very well know whether we are *sick*, or only likely to be so. At first we are got *past feeling* ; — then the Distemper is only *advancing* ; — then again it is *at a Distance* lurking in the private Views of wicked Men ! — It shall be even as he pleases. But what (may I ask) are the *Symptoms* of this great Peril ? If you say we are *past feeling*, you must tell us of some *Burden* that is *capable* of being felt ; and what is it ? Are our Laws dispensed with by arbitrary Power ? Are our Estates confiscated, or is our Trade lost ? Or are the Rights of Toleration invaded ? No ; we have the Gentleman’s own Word, that in all these Points we are unhurt : For in the very Paper last referred to, he congratulates us as “ enjoying the *Fruits*, and “ sharing the *Advantages* of this invaluable Blessing “ *Liberty* ; as owing our *Trade* and extensive *Commerce*, our *Riches* and *Plenty*, the Security of ALL “ our *Properties*, and (N. B.) the UNMOLESTED “ EXERCISE of our RELIGION, to *Liberty* ! ” Why then, it seems, Sir, we *have Liberty*, and enjoy the *Fruits* of it in every Instance : Whence then these

these Complaints about *Slavery*, and the *Inroads*, *Advancements* and *Encroachments* of *Slavery*? It would puzzle a *common* Understanding to reconcile these Contradictions: But the *Secret* lies here: POWER IS NOT in *DISSENTERS* Hands, and such is this Grievance, that it *annihilates* every thing else that is good and desirable: Liberty becomes *no* Liberty, and Government, in how ample a Manner soever it has secured our *Properties*, or the *unmolested Exercise* of our *Religion*, is *Oppression* and *Tyranny*! Hear his own Words: "Genuine *Whigs*, consider all Men as invested by God and Nature with certain *unalienable Rights* and *Privileges*, which they cannot without a *Crime* sacrifice themselves, and of which they cannot without the *HIGHEST Oppression* and *Cruelty* be deprived by others. Such is the Right of Men to judge for themselves in all Matters that relate purely to Conscience, and to worship God according to their several Perswasions — without any Interruption from the Civil Power, or being made subject to *positive* or *NEGATIVE Penalties* upon this Account". Numb. II. By *negative Penalties* this Writer means *Disqualifications* from Offices of *Trust* and *Power*; and the Government is here represented as in the *highest Degree* *oppressive* and *cruel*, merely because Dissenters are kept out of Power. Can common Sense bear this? If it *could* be said that keeping Dissenters out of Power is *Oppression*, it cannot be the *highest* *Oppression*, because keeping Dissenters out of Power, and laying them under Penalties too, is *more*. This was *once* the Case; and if these Men had but the *Sense* of their Forefathers, they would never talk of *Oppression* when every Man's *Property* is safe, and every one is *unmolested* in the Exercise of his *Religion*. But indeed, if Power is *every Thing*, and all Things without Power are *Nothing*, then the Want of Power will be the *highest* *Oppression*, or rather it will

will be the *single Thing* that can be Oppression: And this is the *new Way* of Reckoning: Neither *Propriety*, nor *Riches*, nor the *free Exercise* of Religion, are *any thing* without *Power*! In Consequence of this Principle, the *Old Whig* sets the Government at *Defiance*, and threatens nothing less than a *Revolt*!

“ It hath ever (says he, Number II.) been one of the distinguishing Parts of the Character of a *true Whig*, to be zealous for the Liberties of the Subject, in Opposition to the Claims of Arbitrary Power in our *Kings*, and the Practices of factious and bigotted *Ecclesiasticks* — who have been frequently employed as *Tools* by *ambitious Princes*, to ruin and *enslave* us, and leave us nothing but what we hold at the precarious Pleasure of the *Mitre* or the *Crown*. The Name of *Whig* took its Rise in the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, and was bestowed upon the best *Patriots* then in the Kingdom as a Term of Disgrace, for opposing the *arbitrary Measures* which were carrying on by — the *reigning Prince* — under whom they had just Reason to fear the *Subversion* of their Religion, and the *Loss* of all their *Liberties*.” After an Account of what he calls the Principles of *genuine Whiggism*, he subjoyns, — “ These are the Principles I espouse, and am determined to defend as an *Old Whig*, — and I shall narrowly watch every Degree of *Apostacy* in the Whigs themselves.”

Behold! the Gentleman sets himself up for a *PATRIOT*, and fancies himself in the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, when he says, the best Men in the Kingdom opposed the *arbitrary Measures* of the *reigning Prince*, as from whom they had just Reason to fear the *Subversion* of their Religion, and the *Loss* of all their *Liberties*. Upon this Account it is, that he takes upon himself the Title of the *OLD Whig*, in Contradistinction to the *NEW* or *MODERN Whigs*, whom (for their Adherence to the Crown) he represents as

Apostates from true Whiggism. Is not this Contrast too strong to suffer any one to doubt of his Meaning? Or if you can doubt, go back once more to Numb. I. and see him admiring himself in the same Plumes. "An Attempt to explain the Nature of Liberty, . . . and defend it against the Inroads of *Slavery*, is worthy the Character of a *real* PATRIOT." Who is the Patriot here? Why the *Old Whig*. And what is a Patriot? Why one that opposes arbitrary Power in Defence of the Religion and Liberties of his Country. Now if we are *Slaves*, it is easy to see *whose* Slaves we are; and if HE, as a *Patriot*, is to rescue us from Slavery, what has he to do but to demolish that Power which holds us in Chains? — But for what, I ask once more? Why for *this*, and for this *only*, that DISSENTERS are not IN POWER. For *this*, you have seen, is the *single* Grievance, and such a Grievance (it seems) it is, as is enough to overturn every thing! Hear him once more in his second Paper, "The Obligations between the King and his People are reciprocal, and the Obedience of the latter is THEN ONLY due, when they enjoy their JUST Protection under the Government of the former." Compare this with what was said before, that Exemption from Incapacities to hold Offices of Trust and Power is an *unalienable Right* which Men cannot without a *Crime* sacrifice themselves, and of which they cannot without the *highest Oppression and Cruelty* be depriv'd by others; And the Conclusion will come with uncontrollable Force, that if his Majesty refuses to let Dissenters into Power, he *discharges* them of their Allegiance. And what then will Dissenters have to do? Why (says this Writer) "PRUDENCE may sometimes require Men to sit as easy as they can under *oppressive Laws*." — It is all right Sir, and hangs perfectly well together. They are to submit no longer than will they can find Means to *help* themselves. For to go farther would be to make *themselves* a Sa-
crifice

(II)

crifice to Oppression and Cruelty, a CRIME which I can easily believe the *Piety* of these Writers will never permit them to be guilty of.

We have now seen what is the *general Grievance, Want of Power in Dissenters Hands*. But as Power abstracted from the *Uses* of Power is *Nothing*; the Want of Power can be *no* Grievance any farther than as it includes *other Grievances* under it, *i. e.* any farther than as it ties up Mens Hands from *doing* something which they have a Right to do, and which would serve to some publick Advantage. Hence, a very natural Question arises: What would Dissenters do with Power if they had it? And the true Answer (if we can come at it) will at once let us into all their particular Grievances, and give us a certain Rule to judge how fit they are to be trusted with it.

This Writer then is so far open and explicit, as to tell us in general (Number XII.) that "it ought to be expected of Men in Power, that they should act towards others upon the Principles which they profess: For (says he) the *Sentiments* which a Man has firmly imbibed in his own Mind as just and right, are the *natural Rule* of his *Actions*," There is nothing more true; and therefore as the *Sentiments* of Dissenters are, so would their *Actions* be if they were in Power. To put the Question then home at once: Suppose the View of Dissenters were a TOTAL SUBVERSION of the Church of England, as by Law established; would there be any Sense in their Demands of Powers? The Old Whig seems himself to be concerned that there would be none; for he admonishes his Readers over and over, not to believe that he has any Design against the Church of England. In his first Paper he says, his Design is to lead Men to a thorough Knowledge of those excellent substantial Principles upon which the REFORMATION

" was founded and originally settled amongst us,"
 And Numb. XII. " You tell me (says he to his
 Friend in the Country) "'tis well you have always
 " the *Old Whigs* sent you, else you should have en-
 " tertained *frightful* Ideas of its Design, no less than
 " overturning the Church and State, and all revealed,
 " if not all natural Religion. These Representations
 " you say you see propagated in several publick Pa-
 " pers sent round the Country; but as you cannot see
 " the *least* Ground for them, you wonder by what
 " strange Accident such Alarms are given, or what
 " possible Policy can be answered by the spreading
 " such *Chimeras*. As I cannot take upon myself to
 " give you any Light in this Particular, so I think
 " truly with you, that any one need but read the
 " *Old Whigs* themselves, to see the *glaring* Fal-
 " shood of such Suggestions." Again, Numb. XIII.
 " As I publickly declare my self an Enemy to none
 " but those who are Enemies to the Protestant Prin-
 " ciples of the Church of *England*; so, I doubt not
 " but I shall be esteemed as an *hearty Friend* to it
 " by all who wish to see her encreasing Prosperity;
 " as I shall make it appear that I really am, in the
 " Course of these Papers, by defending that *Founda-*
 " *tion* which *alone* can support her and justify her in
 " her Separation from the Synagogue of *Rome*." Once
 more, Numb. XXIII. " Great Alarm has been giv-
 " en, as if some Writers in the *Old Whig* had a
 " Design on the *establish'd Church*; but this is so *chy-*
 " *merical* an Apprehension, that it is treated by the
 " Generality as it deserves." What we are to un-
 derstand by *substantial Principles of the Reformation*---
 the *Protestant Principles of the Church of England*,
 can be no Secret to those who are acquainted with the
 Use of these *cant* Expressions in the Writings of some
 who are Enemies to all Establishments, but not wil-
 ling, for obvious Reasons, to declare against the
 Church of *England*. But however, I have tran-

transcribed these Passages at full Length, because they appear to me to amount to a *Confession*, that if the View of Dissenters was the *entire Subversion* of the Church of England as by Law established ; It would be (in the Author's own Language) a very *frightful* Thing, and, of Consequence, it could not be reasonable to expect that the Government should listen to their Demands of Power. And I believe that no one who considers for *what Purposes* the Revolution was brought about ; what *Ties* his Majesty is under to *protect* the Church of England as the Church by Law established ; and what Effect the *Attempt* of such a Change would probably have upon the Peace and Safety of these Kingdoms ; can see this Case in any other Light. We may therefore be allow'd to put the Matter upon this general Issue : *Is this the View* of Dissenters in their Demands of Power, or is it *not* ? The *Old Whig* has undertaken their Cause : Let us hear what he has to say *farther*, and what there is in his Papers to justify these repeated Assurances that there are *no Designs* against the Church of England.

The Religion of the Church of England (it is agreed on both Sides) is Christianity reformed from the Corruptions of Popery ; and the Principles upon which our Reformers proceeded in bringing about this Change, and settling the new Worship, are those *Principles* upon which the Reformation was *founded* and *originally settled* amongst us, and which, therefore, the *Old Whig* (in order to verify his Pretence of *no Designs* against the *establish'd Church*,) is obliged to shew are left in their *full Force* by his Scheme. A Christian Church there never was, or can be, without a Christian *Ministry*. A Ministry was appointed by Christ, who left the ordering of his Church to his *Apostles*, which was by them settled in the *Episcopal Government*. The Church of

Rome

Rome accordingly, (as all other Churches) was governed by Bishops when the Reformation took Place; and what did our Reformers do? Did they set up a new Ministry independent of the ancient *Episcopal Ministry*? No; if they had, they must have condemned it as one of the Errors of the Church of Rome that they had Episcopal Ordination and Government; which was far from being one of the Principles of Reformation in the Church of England. They grafted therefore the new Settlement upon the Ministry then subsisting, and under the Orders of the then Bishops the Reformed Clergy of this Church exercised their Functions. This shews beyond all Contradiction, that one Principle upon which the Reformation was founded, and originally settled among us, was this, That the Ministerial Power then in Being was lawfully conveyed, and in Consequence might lawfully and validly be exercised by the Reformed Clergy of this Church; and whoever denies this, removes the corner Stone upon which the whole Fabrick of the Church of England rests. And what says the Old Whig? "I do firmly believe and stedfastly maintain, that the Clergy do not and cannot derive, as the Ministers of Christ, any real Validity of Orders, or Right of Administration in the Christian Church, from the Antichristian Church of Rome, Numb. IV." Go to Numb. XVIII, and XIX. and you will find our Orders treated as mere Consecration, — as of no more Worth than Orders received from an Indian Brachman, or a Mahometan Deruse, — as absolutely polluting our Communion, and making it unsafe and dangerous. In fine, you will see ALL who claim under the Succession as derived from the Church of Rome, represented as Lending their helping Hands to the Cause of Popery. Thus is the first Principle upon which the Reformation was founded and originally settled amongst us, taken Care of by the Old Whig's Scheme! And what are

are we to expect from such Men as these in Power? Take it in this Gentleman's own Words; "*Down* with the *Dagon* of these *Philistines*, the *Idol* of the *Apostolick uninterrupted Succession*, and all the *imaginary Powers* that are to be conveyed with it, "*(Numb. XIX.)* This would be the *leading Step*, the *ABOLITION* of *EPISCOPACY*, and every thing that hangs upon it. — To proceed;

A Ministry secured, the next Care of our Reformers was to lay a proper Foundation for *Uniformity* in *Doctrine* and *Worship*. To which End a *Formulary* of Faith was settled conformable to Scripture, and a *Liturgy* set up which our Laws declare to be *to the Honour of God*, — *the Comfort of all good People desirous to live in Christian Conversation*, and *most profitable to the Estate of this Realm*. * But this Writer seems to be of Opinion (*Numb. VIII.*) That the Honour of God would have been better consulted by leaving full *Scope* for all that *Variety* which the Diversity of Mens Sentiments (various, he says, as their *Features*, *Shape*, and *Complexion*) can produce; and tells us, That "the representing a Dis-
"agreement of Opinion in Religion as tending to pub-
"lick Mischief and Disorder, is *most unaccountably capricious and absurd* — That "all the solemn
"Exclamations that are made against a Variety of
"Religious Opinions are really a *Burlesque upon Na-*
"ture, and the Effect of *gross Ignorance and Pre-*
"sumption. — That "if all Mankind publickly
"adhered to one Form, and maintained the same
"speculative Principles, they must appear as *acting*
"in *Masquerade*. — That "to attempt to bring
"Men to an Agreement in one Notion of Religion,
"is *Machiavelian Policy*, and can be of *no Service* to
"the Cause of Virtue and a rational Piety, but rather

* Vid. *Acts of Uniformity*.

" serves

" serves to inspire Men with *mad Zeal, hereditary*
 " *Hatred* of each other, the Sources of destructive
 " Wars, and of most dreadful Scenes of Desolation
 " and Misery. — That NATIONAL Religions
 " create that very *Variety* in speculative Principles and
 " Modes of Worship which the Advocates for them
 " are so forward to complain of." Upon the whole
 therefore he declares his Opinion as a *consistent Prote-*
stant, That " the Beauty and true Order of the Moral
 " and *Christian* World (like that of the *Natural*) con-
 " sists in *Uniformity* with *Variety*. *Uniformity*, in
 " essential Principles: *Variety*, in *doubtful Speculations*,
 (which, if we had his Account, I am afraid, would
 be ALL Points of *Christian Belief*, but certainly are
 all Points relating to Faith or Worship about which
 Christians *may* differ, and in Fact *do* differ among
 themselves) which *Variety* he is so far from looking
 upon as a *Blemish*, that he thinks it to be an " Orna-
 ment," and fancies that the lessening the Number of
 such Differences would even " marr the *Beauty* and
 " disturb the *Order* of the Christian World."

To have done this Writer full Justice, I should have
 transcribed this whole Paper, as also *Numb. XI.* which
 are each of them throughout a Libel upon our Acts of
 Uniformity. The grand Mistake which lies at Bot-
 tom is this, That no publick Provisions for Uniformity
 in Faith or Worship can be of *any* Use or Service to
 the Purposes intended by them, *unless* they take away
 Liberty of Conscience, and pin Men down to a
blind Submission. Take his own Words as they stand,
Numb. VIII. " If various Schemes of Religion were
 " naturally productive of some Confusion and Disor-
 " der, how is it possible to rectify it? — If we
 " give up the Right of private Judgment, what can
 " we think of substituting in its Room to bring Man-
 " kind to an Unity of Faith and Practice? — If
 " it be said, that neither the Church nor the Civil
 " Ma-

“ Magistrate are recommended as a *decisive* Authority
 “ to which *absolute* Submission is due.” (*i. e.* if the
 Right of private Judgment is *not* given up) “ this is
 “ taking away the Foundation, and yet endeavouring
 “ to support the Superstructure ; for an Authority
 “ that is not *decisive* is *no* Authority at all. And if
 “ every Man must either approve or reject the pub-
 “ lick Doctrines and Forms of Worship as they are
 “ allowed or condemned by his own Reason, and
 “ agree or disagree with his own Sense of Scripture, a
 “ PUBLICK LEADING in Religion will be of NO--
 “ GREATER USE than the *Instructions* and *Reason-*
 “ *ings* of wise and inquisitive Men in *private* Stations,
 “ who may have this Advantage to plead, that they
 “ have no particular Inducement to suit Religion to
 “ the Genius of Courts, and the Ambition of Princes,
 “ nor to use it as an Engine for erecting a Spiritual
 “ Tyranny, to satiate Priestly Avarice and Lust of
 “ Power.” The good Sense of this Passage is of a
 Piece with the good Manners of it. Authority is ei-
 ther *absolute* or *Nothing* ! Laws *decide absolutely* the
 Rule of Conscience, or they *do* Nothing ! These are
 perpetual Instances of the incorrigible Perverseness of
 these Writers. — But it is not my Business at
 present to dispute Points with these Gentlemen. The
 Question is not what our Acts of Uniformity *are* good
 for, but what *THEY think them* good for ; and you see
 plainly that they are represented not only as *useless*, but
 as a publick Grievance. The Old Whig may be of this
 Opinion for ought I can tell ; but great must be his As-
 surance to pretend that he has no Designs against the es-
 tablished Church, unless he will shew us *where* we are
 to look for the *establis’d Church*, when every single
 Law in virtue of which it *becomes* an establish’d Church
 shall be repealed, and nothing shall be left but this *one*
 Protestant Principle of Reformation (which this Writer
 seems to approve of) that every Man should follow
 his own Imagination, and have a natural Right to
 C Power

Power to support it. But what are we to have when this Scheme shall take Effect, and this great *Eye-sore* the Church of England is removed? Nothing. For you may observe, that the Objection lies against the Church of England not as a *bad* Establishment, but *absolutely* as an *Establishment*, the plain Consequence of which is, that no Religion ought to be publickly established. And this is what the *Old Whig* directly avows; who renounces *ALL Canons and Injunctions*, (Numb. IV.) -- *ALL human authoritative Standards of Faith and Orthodoxy* (Numb. V.) And yet it is plain, that without such Acts of human Authority there *can* be no established Religion; no, nor without human Laws to back and support them. But concerning these the *Old Whig* says, That "Religion, as such, *cannot possibly* be the Subject of them," "and that every Attempt to make it so is *absurd and injurious*." Numb. VII. Again; ----- "Religion is entirely a Matter of private Judgment, ----- and therefore no human Law *can possibly* have any Authority in this Matter." Numb. XXI. His Meaning is, that every thing which concerns Religion ought to be left entirely to private Judgment, and that *no* Laws ought to be made about it, as appears from what follows in the same Paper: "I am not pleading for any Laws in general for the Support of Religion. On the contrary, I freely come into your Principle, that - - it is every Man's Duty as a moral Agent, and a faithful Christian, to protest against all *Usurpations* of the Rights of Conscience," which amounts to saying, that *ALL* Laws made in Support of Religion are *Usurpations* of the Rights of Conscience.

We are got to the Bottom of the *new* Scheme, and see plainly where it ends. I will now beg Leave to ask the Dissenters a few Questions: Are *these* the Principles they will stand by, or are they not? If they are, what do they expect will be the Issue of such Measures if

if ever they should be put in Execution? To help them to judge rightly in this Case, I will give them the Opinion of an *able* Gentleman, upon whom the *Old Whig* (Numb. XL.) bestows great Compliments, and is displeased with him for nothing but this, that he has not been *so familiar* with the Administration as himself. It is Mr. OSBORNE, who in the *Daily Gazette* of Nov. 22. has very frankly declared his Opinion, that our Constitution will never be *right*, till ALL *Civil Incapacities* on Account of Differences merely religious be *removed*. The Benefit which He expects from such a Change is worth hearing, and he tells us his Hopes are founded upon *Knowledge* and *Experience*. "I know (says he) one large County in England, where almost half the Clergy have entertained just Notions of Liberty in Church and State." What he means by *just* Notions we all understand; and the Consequence of the happy Progress of these Notions, it seems, is, that "neither Dissenters from the Church of England, nor Absenters from ALL Churches, neither *Free-thinkers* nor *Infidels*, feel any Church Power. They are *easy* and *undisturbed*, and do not know that there is a Church or a Clergyman in the Kingdom, but when they accidentally see the one with a *Steeple* to it, or meet the other in the *Streets* or *Coffee house*." I am verily of Opinion with this Gentleman, that there would be less Use of Churches or Clergy, if once the State should grow to be so *thoroughly careless* about Religion as the *Old Whig* and his Friends seem to think it ought to be. And have Dissenters the Vanity to expect that their *Meeting-Houses* would fare better? Do they not see and feel that these Notions hurt all Communions alike? The best thing they have to say, is, That when by this hopeful Project Religion is turned quite out of Doors, something may arise out of the *general Confusion* which may turn out to their Advantage. But has not *Papery* as fair a

Chance in such a Case as *Independency* or *Pyesbyteri-
anism*? Or if they were sure (which they cannot be)
that things *would* settle at last in their Plan, with
what Sort of Grace could they think of erecting it in-
to an Establishment, after such open Declarations of
the *Iniquity* of ALL Establishments? This last Ques-
tion indeed I do not my self lay much Stress upon.
For it may be no hard Matter, perhaps, for Men to
renounce old Principles which were called in only as
Expedients, when the *Purpose* of them is once served.
But the material Question that I would ask them is
this: What is *that Difference* between *their* Religion
and *ours* that will *justify* the making such a desperate
Experiment? Let them answer this Question first to
their own Consciences, and then to the World.
speak to them as Men of Conscience; for after such
large Professions of Duty and Loyalty to his Majesty
and his Family, and the *open Avowal* of their Dislike
of *Wealth* and *Power* in the Clergy, it would be too
hard to suggest that they *mean* nothing but the EMO-
LUMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

I am sorry I have it to say of Dissenters, that their
Bigottry to their own Way has more than *once*, in
very critical Conjunctures, betrayed them into *gross*
Inconsistencies. Their Conduct in King *James* the Se-
cond's Reign, in falling in with the arbitrary Measures
of that Prince, in the Exercise of a *dispensing Power*
(with Respect to the very Laws now in Dispute) in
order to fill the Posts of the Kingdom with *Roman*
Catholicks, is very well known. The Attack now
happens from another Quarter, and the same Laws
are again struck at by *Infidels* and *Libertines* to make
Way for a Scheme of IRRELIGION, into which they
run with the same Blindness. But if Dissenters can-
not, or will not see, I hope there are those that both can
and do see, and that the Bulk of the Nation is not
yet quite mad enough for these Experiments. I hope
likewise,

likewise, that so long as these Laws stand unrepealed; it may be thought *no Crime* in the *English* Bishops and Clergy to use all Methods that are becoming them to prevent their being ever repealed. And yet it is for *this* and *this only*, that they (such of them I mean as are *firm* to the present Constitution) are painted out as the veriest Monsters in Nature. Read the Old Whig, (Numb. XIII.) and see their Character, if you delight in Scandal! Let the Dissenters speak: Do they not *know* that the Bishops and Clergy in general are desirous that Dissenters should enjoy their Toleration; and yet even in *this* Point they have not been able to escape the Censures of the Old Whig. As the Case is very extraordinary, I shall give it the Reader in the Gentleman's own Words, (Numb. XXXVIII.) and therewith conclude this Paper.

“ Nor would (speaking of the *Occasional Paper*,
 “ Numb. I.) this Writer's Boast of *Toleration* to Pro-
 “ testants have kept him *in Countenance*, if he had
 “ wrote to one who was acquainted that *Prosecutions*
 “ were now carried on against Dissenters for their edu-
 “ cating their *Children*, and with the *Threats* which
 “ have been scattered round the Kingdom. The *In-*
 “ *quisition* into the State, Numbers and Circumstances
 “ of all Men whatsoever, dissenting from the Church,
 “ Protestant Dissenters as well as others; and particu-
 “ larly whether they had in all Things conformed to
 “ Law, and qualified themselves to pray, or preach, or
 “ instruct Youth according to Law, would not have
 “ left him Room to *name* even the Word TOLERA-
 “ TION.” Of *Prosecutions* carried on against Dissen-
 “ ters for *educating* their *Children*, and *Threats* scattered
 “ round the Kingdom, I neither *know* nor have *heard*
 “ any thing; and till the Gentleman will please to name
 “ the *Instances* in such a Manner as that the Publick may
 “ judge of them, it shall pass with me for *Scandal*. But
 “ I have known some Bishops at their Visitations who
 “ have

have put such Queries to Church-Wardens as those, which the Gentleman refers to in the Margin of his Paper, viz. *Are there any Protestant Dissenters in your Parish? How many? Of what Denomination? Have they one or more Meeting-houses? Are those Houses licensed! What are the Names of their Teachers? And are they duly qualified according to the Act of Indulgence?* Such INQUISITIONS, I say, I have known, and excepting the ill Sound of the Word *Inquisition*, wickedly applied in this Case, what is there in all this? What is there unbecoming a Protestant Bishop? What is there more than his Office and Duty require? Is it a Consequence of the Toleration granted to Protestant Dissenters, that *Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks*, may gather Congregations in every Diocese of England? If this is not the Consequence, how shall it be guarded against? How otherwise, than by enquiring whether Teachers of separate Congregations are within the Allowance of the Act of Toleration? And how shall that be known but by enquiring whether they are the Persons described in the Act, *i. e.* the Persons who have qualified according to the Act? Would you have the Bishop connive at every Teacher, be his Doctrine never so perverse, who is not, who never was intended to be tolerated? Is it a Persecution on Dissenters to take care that vicious and immoral, or free-thinking, unbelieving Preachers should not *personate* them, and corrupt the Faith of Christians under the Disguise of a Protestant Dissenter? Nothing surely was ever more unrighteous and malicious than this Complaint, or more contrary to common Sense. And it shews great Want of proper Matter for Complaint, when so willing a Complainer as this Writer, is by mere Distress forced into so very absurd an one.

